(ej if not, by when it would be launched in all the States?

THE MINISTER OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI): (a) and (b) Yes Sir, the West Bengal Government has formulated and launched a biotechnology Policy with major emphasis on conservation of biodiversity, strengthening of agrarian economy, food based products, medicinal plants, environment, promotion of village level industries and generation of employment. The policy also addresses the use of bioinformatics, knowledge on IPR protection, biosafety and bioethics.

The major areas identified are development of transgenic cereal crops, jute and tea cultivation, medicine land aromatic plants, establishment of gene banks, biofertilizers, biopesticides, edible vaccines, enhancement of milk yield, vaccines for livestock diseases and system management with alternative resources and biomass development.

(c) The Department of Biotechnology continues to provide financial grant for R&D projects in the identified thrust areas to various research institutions, autonomous bodies and universities in West Bengal. Even in the policy formulation, the Department has been closely associated.

Formulation of a State-level Biotechnology Policy is a step towards the application of biotechnology for location specific problems in the States.

(d) and (e) Efforts for development, demonstration, training and application have been made by many other States in close "collaboration with the DBT. Some of the States are Orissa, Kerala, Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, etc.

Boosting up steel consumption

† *288. SHRIMATI SAROJ DUBEY:
SHRI K.B. KRISHNA MURTHY:

Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to formulate a new poljcy to boost the sagging steel consumption, or resort to legislation to promote steel

† Original notice of the Question was received in Hindi.

consumption in the country; if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor;

(b) whether a Committee of experts on steel industry has recommended implementation of Buy Indian Act, to promote use of Indian steel by projects funded by public money, in tune with the Buy American Act; and

(c) what other steel industry Yelated measures like over-capacity of production, making anti-dumpting duty more effective, credit flow to steel sector, etc. are under consideration of Government?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI BRAJ KISHORE TRIPATHY): (a) Government has decided to formulate a National Steel Policy to draw out the road map of the iron and steel industry in the context of second generation reforms, restructuring and globalization. A drafting Committee under the Chairmanship of Development Commissioner for Iron and Steel has been set up to prepare the Draft National Steel Policy. The Committee has prepared a first draft and the same is under examination in consultation with major steel producers and associations.

(b) A proposal has been mooted to enact a legislation—"Buy India Act" to encourage growth and development of indigenous steel industry by giving preference to indigenous steel producers in Government procurement on the lines of "Buy American Act".

(c) The annual growth rate of steel consumption has been below the expected level in the last couple of years. Therefore, there has been mismatch between demand and supply with supply exceeding demand in certain categories of products. However, this mismatch is temporary and Government is making efforts to see that the demand is strengthened. Steps taken by the Government to raise consumption level of steel in the country, include (i) constitution of a National Campaign Committee to promote steel consumption through development of markets especially in the rural areas, (ii) encouraging usage of steel in new application areas such as grain storage systems, crash barriers in highways and express ways, (iii) providing financial support to R&D ventures in iron and steel sector to reduce production cost and (iv) organizing seminars for dissemination of knowledge on the use of steel, etc.

As for dumping of steel products in the country is concerned measures like imposition of floor price on certain items of steel, restricting imports of seconds and defectives through designated ports and imposition of anti-dumping/countervalling duty are some of the measures taken by the Government.

Raising resources from the capital market and through institutional funding by the steel producers would depend upon their financial soundness and credit worthiness. Extension of further credit for the steel sector would be determined by the lending institutions in their commercial judgement.

National Leechi Research Centre in Bihar

† *289. SHRIMATI KUM KUM RAI: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the foundation stone for the National Leechi Research Centre was laid in Mushhari region of Muzaffarpur district in Bihar by the Minister of Agriculture, during last year; if so, what are the reasons for not starting the construction work, even after a lapse of more than one year;

(b) whether construction of the Centre would be completed during the current financial year; and

(c) if so, the details thereto?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI AJIT SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir. The reasons for not starting the construction work even after a lapse of more than one year is the delay in the execution of lease deed for transfer of land between Bihar Government and the Indian Council of Agricultural Research which happened on 24th June, 2002.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Question does not arise.

† Original notice of the Question was received in Hindi.